It has been decided to extend the facility of collection of passport applications through Speed Post Centres to the North-Eastern States also. Besides, all the States including the States in the North-Eastern region have been asked to start collecting passport applications at a designated office at district level.

(c) Does not arise.

Sick units in the country

†*350. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI :

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' :

Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that sickness is increasing continuously in the small scale industries in the country;

(b) if so, the number of sick industries in the country during 1998-1999, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001, State-wise;

(c) the percentage of sick industries to the number of small scale industries; and

(d) the industries with maximum and minimum level of sickness, State-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. As per the latest data compiled by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the number of Sick Small Scale Industries (SSI) has decreased from 306221 as at the end of March, 1999 to 304235 at the end of March, 2000. The State-wise data on sick small scale industries is given in the Statement. (*See* below).

(c) The percentage of sick SSI units to total SSI units as at the end of March, 2000 works out to 9.5%.

(d) As per the information compiled by the RBI, the maximum number of sick SSI units was in textile sector and the minimum in gem and jewellery sector at the end of March, 2000 in the country. The data on industry-wise sick SSI units in different states are not compiled by the RBI.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Statement

Number of Sick Small Scale Industries (State/UT-wise)

State/Union Territory	At the end of March, 1999	At the end of March, 2000
Assam	10586	11445
Meghalaya	447	528
Mizoram	40	41
Bihar	26293	26909
Arunachal Pradesh	116	120
West Bengal	146182	143893
Nagaland	166	168
Manipur	5237	5577
Orissa	10134	7444
Sikkim	28	25
Tripura	6914	7170
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	25	31
Uttar Pradesh	17320	21235
Delhi	3789	3309
Punjab	3551	1897
Haryana	3180	2952
Chandigarh	187	156
Jammu & Kashmir	630	2002
Himachal Pradesh	1103	893
Rajasthan	12835	7560
Gujarat	4170	5928
Maharashtra	13373	9115
Daman & Diu	13	10

State/Union Territory	At the end of March, 1999	At the end of March, 2000
Goa	216	161
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	24	46
Madhya Pradesh	6808	6072
Andhra Pradesh	6260	12461
Karnataka	4342	5416
Lakshadweep	0	0
Tamil Nadu	11408	11602
Kerala	10074	9017
Pondicherry	770	1052
TOTAL	306221	304235

SOURCE : RBI

MOU between Malaysia and IRCON International

*351. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Prime Minister had visited Malaysia from 13—16 May, 2001;

(b) if so, the details of the MOU's signed between both the countries;

(c) whether any MOU was signed between Malaysia and IRCON International Ltd. for double tracking and electrification of Ipoh-Padang Besar Section KTM Line; and

(d) if so, the details of the project and its present status ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) and (b) yes; Sir. The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee, visited Malaysia from May 13—16, 2001. Five MOUs were signed between India and Malaysia during the visit.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. IRCON signed an MOU with Government of Malaysia to execute the project of Dobule Tracking of the Railway Line between Ipoh and